

‘Blissfully unaware’: Many food manufacturers don’t realize new GM labeling law applies to them and are unprepared for end-of-year deadline

Compliance with the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard (NBFDS) – which requires firms with annual sales of >\$2.5m to label ‘bioengineered’ foods, beverages, and supplements – is mandatory from January 1, 2022. So is the industry up to speed? It’s a pretty mixed bag, according to labeling experts.

For every large company that has already spent months – if not years – gearing up for the NBFDS, there are probably 10 smaller companies who may be blissfully unaware that the law even applies to them.

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The law – which is being [challenged in court by some groups?? who believe it doesn’t go far enough](#) – defines bioengineered foods as those that “contain detectable genetic material that has been modified through certain lab [in vitro](#) rDNA] techniques and cannot be created through conventional breeding or found in nature.”???

In practice, this means that many highly-refined ingredients (starches, oils, sweeteners, emulsifiers) from widely bioengineered crops such as corn and soy will likely not require labeling, because the modified material is not detectable through testing.

However, the onus is on manufacturers to go through [USDA’s published list of bioengineered foods??](#), identify any ingredients they use that may be derived from these crops, and then contact suppliers to determine whether they need to be labeled.

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